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**Blue Helmets and White Hulls:  
Expanding the Coast Guard's  
International Missions**

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This memorandum discusses the utility of the Coast Guard in meeting many of the maritime challenges facing the international community in the years ahead. It also argues for a moderate expansion of Coast Guard force structure to help it meet these need demands.

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EXPANDING THE COAST GUARD'S INTERNATIONAL  
MISSIONS**

by

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The main points of this paper were drawn from a speech delivered by Professor Daniel entitled "Peacekeeping as a Potential Mission for the US Coast Guard" delivered at the US Coast Guard, Atlantic Region, annual meeting on 06 April 1994 at Governor's Island, New York. A version of this paper was also scheduled for publication in the April 1995 *Proceedings*.

*The views expressed herein are strictly those of the authors and have not been endorsed by any agency of the US Government.*

The United States Coast Guard possesses tremendous potential to further both global and US interests — but for numerous reasons, including political and economic constraints, this potential will not likely be fully realized. Much has been written and said about the post-Cold War world. Amid this hortatory blizzard one would be hard-pressed to find predictions of a peaceful and stable world. Robert Stephens Staley II, in an insightful work on naval peacekeeping,<sup>1</sup> posited six maritime scenarios which could be faced by the United Nations:

1. Turkey requests a United Nations maritime force in the Black Sea to help ease tensions between Russia and the Ukraine over the division of the Black Sea Fleet.
2. Another Gulf crisis prompts threats of environmental terrorism in which vast quantities of oil will be released into the Gulf. The United Nations considers ways to counter the threat and prevent massive environmental damage.
3. A group of southwest Pacific island states present evidence that their fisheries are being depleted by developed nations' fish factories contrary to international agreements. They request a UN force to patrol their seas and enforce the law.
4. A UN panel recommends monitoring the world's oceans for excessive levels of CO<sub>2</sub> which scientists contend are polluting the seas.
5. The north/south economic gap worsens and refugees flood the seas looking for a better life. Thousands of these refugees die at sea because of unsafe transportation, lack of food and water, and the unwillingness of states to take them in. The UN considers taking action to stop the tragedy.
6. Arms smuggling increases as Third World populations see conflict and terrorism as their best means to affect change. The UN debates the establishment of a UN Maritime Intercept Force.

Five out of the six scenarios share one thing in common: they are better suited to coast guard than naval forces. How likely are these scenarios? Derek Boothby, the Director of the European Division for the UN's Department of Political Affairs believes at least some of them are quite likely. He notes "that 95% of the world's fish catch comes from within 200 miles of shore. Furthermore, if countries are ranked

in terms of reliance on protein derived from fish, 39 of the first 40 places are occupied by developing countries."<sup>2</sup> The fact that most of the dietary protein in developing nations comes from the sea and their dependence on that source of protein will increase at the same time the ocean's future as a secure source of food will come into doubt means international tension is unavoidable.<sup>3</sup> These states will have neither the technical nor military means to monitor and enforce fishing rights. They must, by necessity, turn to states in the developed world to help them secure their resources. Unfortunately, some of these states are contributors to the problem.<sup>4</sup> Boothby quite rightly notes that "many of these issues will be seen as falling within the purview of the U.S. Coast Guard, which by itself is the world's fourth largest navy."<sup>5</sup>

In addition, as the world stands at the crossroads of a new security environment, the hope engendered by the United Nations as it helped both Namibia and Cambodia make peaceful transitions to democracy has dramatically diminished by operations in Angola, Somalia and Bosnia. Still seeking to find peaceful solutions in war torn nations, the United Nations has increasingly turned to sanctions in an attempt to influence rogue states. Since 1990, the UN Security Council has placed embargoes on Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Libya, Liberia, Angola's UNITA rebels, and Haiti.<sup>6</sup> Sanctions against North Korea were also threatened. Sanctions and fishery protection, however, are not the only UN tasks which have a maritime component.

Before discussing UN maritime tasks in which the Coast Guard may be asked to participate, however, a brief primer on UN military operations in general will help frame the arguments. Table 1 provides a synopsis of six lists of peace support operations from various sources. To bound the discussion, we will concentrate on the list generated by John Mackinlay and Jarat Chopra from Brown University's Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies since its division of UN operations into three levels facilitates the argument.<sup>7</sup>

At one end, Level One missions are the types of traditional peacekeeping operations in which the United Nations has excelled over the past 50 years. They are primarily benign missions conducted by lightly armed forces with the consent of involved parties. These

<b>WATSON INSTITUTE</b> (Summer 92)	<b>SHAPE</b> (Jun 93)	<b>BRITISH ARMY</b> <b>"Wider Peace-keeping"</b> (Jan 94)
<b>Level One</b>	<b>Traditional Peacekeeping</b>	<b>Conflict Prevention</b>
Observer Missions	Observation	Early Warning
Peacekeeping	Interposition	Surveillance
	Transition	Stabilizing Measures
		Preventive Deployment
<b>Level Two</b>	<b>Conflict Prevention</b>	<b>Demobilization Operations</b>
Preventive Deployment	Early Warning	Secure Agreements
	Surveillance	Cease-fires
Intrastate Conflict Resolution	Preventive Deployment	Withdrawal of Forces
	Stabilizing Measures	Belligerent Cantonment
Civil Assistance	<b>Humanitarian Missions</b>	Disarmament
	Disaster Relief	Dispersal and Rehabilitation
Protection of Relief Supplies	Civilian Assistance	
	Humanitarian Aid Delivery	<b>Military Assistance</b>
Movement Guarantee/ Denial	<b>Indirect Involvement</b>	Law and Order
	Support Coordination	Civil Protection
<b>Level Three</b>	Selected Resource Employ- ment	Civil Assistance
High Intensity Operations	Sanctions	<b>Humanitarian Operations</b>
		<b>Movement Guarantee/Denial</b>
<b>US ARMY—FM 100-23</b> (Jan 94)	<b>CENTER FOR NAVAL ANALYSES—CRM 93-40</b> (Jul 93)	<b>AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE FORCES</b> (Jun 93)
Peace Operations	<b>Humanitarian Assistance/Intervention</b>	Observer Missions
Military Support to Diplomacy	Transportation	Interpositional Forces
Observer Missions	Administrative Support	Preventive Deployment
Truce Missions	Evacuation	Internal Conflict Resolution
Restoration of Order/Stability	Monitoring	Civil Security Assistance
Preventive Deployment	<b>Maritime Peacekeeping</b>	Right of Passage (Guarantee/ Denial)
Humanitarian Assistance	<b>Maritime Agreements Enforce- ment</b>	Sanctions
Movement Guarantee/Denial	<b>Protection/Interdiction of Sea/ Air Traffic</b>	Peace Enforcement
Sanction Enforcement	<b>Show of Force</b>	
Protected Zones Establishment	<b>Demilitarization and Arms Control</b>	

Table 1. Synopsis of Tasks for Peace Forces<sup>11</sup>

missions include observation, interposition of forces between feuding factions, surveillance, and preventive deployment.

At the other end, Level Three operations include enforcement actions like those undertaken during *Operation Desert Storm*.<sup>8</sup> The US Coast Guard is unlikely to get heavily involved in either of these levels. At the more benign end, there are numerous other nations capable of providing the appropriate patrol craft.<sup>9</sup> For example, the Argentine Navy provided four fast patrol boats to a UN observer mission in the Gulf of Fonseca.<sup>10</sup> This was an interesting exercise in that the patrol boats were painted white (one challenge more easily met by the Coast Guard than the Navy), flew the UN flag and were unarmed. On the combat end of UN operations, the US Navy will probably be the primary provider of maritime forces.

By elimination then, the operations which will most likely involve the Coast Guard are found in Level Two. As Mackinlay states, "UN multinational forces will be stronger and more effective [than Level I forces], but they will continue to operate under the limitations of minimum force rule."<sup>12</sup> Table 2 lists a few of the missions which might be involved in Level Two operations. They are divided into two categories: active missions which inherently carry greater risk and require interaction with belligerents; and passive missions which do not necessarily require interaction and are, therefore, more benign.

In order to meet the requirements of the missions listed in Table 2, forces must possess certain qualifications or characteristics. Table 3 lists Level Two requirements and the associated force characteristics needed to achieve them. The first requirement is impartiality. As Major General Indar Rikhye has stated, "Maintaining impartiality in its relations with all sides is crucial to the success of any UN force."<sup>13</sup> At times it is also important to be seen as non-threatening. In this regard, Coast Guard cutters are welcomed in many politically sensitive areas where Navy ships are not.<sup>14</sup> This is because the Coast Guard's "footprint" differs from the Navy's as moccasins differ from boots. At the same time, Level Two forces must be able to use minimal force when necessary. Here again, the Coast Guard is the ideal choice for such operations. The Coast Guard's international reputation as both a humanitarian and military organization is entirely unique. In 1919, the Coast Guard's first Commandant, Commodore Bertholf, noted this uniqueness:

The Coast Guard exists for the particular and main purpose of performing duties which have no connection with a state of war, but which, on the contrary, are constantly necessary as peace functions. It is, of course, essentially an emergency service and it is organized along military lines because that sort of organization best enables the Coast Guard to keep prepared as an emergency service, and by organization along military lines it is invaluable in times of war as an adjunct and auxiliary to the Navy.<sup>15</sup>

PASSIVE	ACTIVE
<i>Coast Guard Contributory Missions</i>	<i>Coast Guard Missions</i>
Observe	Refugee protection
Monitor	Protection of commercial installations/practices
<i>Other Service Missions</i>	Conduct environmental clean-up
Preventive	Guarantee or denial of movement
	<i>Coast Guard Contributory Missions</i>
	Separate forces
	Provide humanitarian services
	<i>Other Service Missions</i>
	Clear mines
	Disarm/demobilize belligerents
	Hostage rescue/civilian evacuation
	Enforce safe havens

Table 2. Maritime Tasks

Because the Coast Guard is organized along military lines (and because of its long history of dealing with the interception of contraband goods), the Coast Guard has access to the United States' sophisticated intelligence network. This is critical for success in most operations. The success of Level Two operations also depends on their multinational character. The fact is that the "majority of the world's navies exist to conduct functions in the coastal or contiguous sea areas. . . . With the exception of their combat or national defense duties, these navies resemble the U.S.



MISSION REQUIREMENT	CHARACTERISTIC TO ACHIEVE
Impartiality  Non-threatening Posture	Conduct Reputation Footprint
Capability to use minimal force	Connectivity to sophisticated surveillance Self-defense systems Offensive precision weapons
Ability to work multinationally	Wide-ranging interoperability

**Table 3. Requirements for Level Two Success**

Coast Guard in everything but their name. Small regional navies more readily relate to the Coast Guard because of the similarity in force mix and missions have more in common with the U.S. Coast Guard than with the U.S. Navy.<sup>16</sup> Because the Coast Guard must communicate with both sophisticated naval systems and low-technology commercial and pleasure craft, the Coast Guard also has wide-ranging capability for working with others.

No matter how one wishes to cut the Level Two cake, the Coast Guard appears to be a large maritime slice. But the fact that the world is a mess and the Coast Guard has capabilities which might be useful in dealing with them, does not mean it will be available to help.

Like most every other segment of government, the Coast Guard is facing funding constraints.<sup>17</sup> And the budget dollar it is fighting for competes with highways and bridges not other Services. When the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated that he "was more certain than ever the Coast Guard belongs in the national command authority's tool box of military capabilities" and that its "national security functions will evolve with the emerging requirements of the post-Cold War era," he was encouraging the Department of Transportation to help subsidize the Department of Defense.<sup>18</sup> The question at hand is not whether the US Coast Guard will but should it get more

deeply involved in these activities. Is increased US Coast Guard involvement in global crises in America's best interests? We assert it is. But how interested is the Department of Transportation in foreign policy?

Even though the Coast Guard's budget is driven primarily by a domestic agenda, broader security issues fall under its fourfold charter of Maritime Safety, Maritime Law Enforcement, Marine Environmental Protection and National Security. As a former Commandant testified before Congress, the Coast Guard has "been involved in every major American conflict since 1790. During this past year, [1993, the Coast Guard] established two new units — Squadrons 42 and 44, based in Portsmouth, Virginia. These squadrons consist of six officers each and deploy on U.S. Navy ships in the Red Sea to coordinate the Multi-National Maritime Interception Operations to enforce United Nations sanctions against Iraq. Also, Coast Guard personnel have trained Romanian and Bulgarian officials to enforce sanctions against Serbia on the Danube River."<sup>19</sup> In the Pacific, the Coast Guard played a major role in a combined search and rescue exercise with Russian forces as well as participating in a major Joint Task Force exercise involving all of the Services.<sup>20</sup> For years the Coast Guard has been involved in annual United Americas Training deployments and West African Training Cruises. It is involved because the Coast Guard's unique expertise and training are what developing and coastal states need.

Unfortunately, the Coast Guard's plate is already full. Increasing Coast Guard participation in international peace operations therefore comes with a price. Either the Coast Guard must be moderately expanded or its mission priorities must be adjusted. We recommend the first alternative, moderate expansion. Why should America pay this price? Although the foreign policy debate still rages about America's place in the post-Cold War world, consensus is slowly being reached that the US must remain engaged. If our only military alternatives for that engagement are US fighting forces, the US will gain the decidedly unfavorable reputation as a bully. As Shakespeare cautioned, "O, it is excellent to have giant's strength; but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant."<sup>21</sup> By providing Coast Guard force in situations where they are better suited than the Navy, America can present a more politically acceptable and environmentally helpful face — a "greener" face, if you will — to the world.

The expanded Coast Guard should procure vessels which are designed to meet the demanding challenges of peace support operations. We think they should contain the following capabilities:

- Access to comprehensive surveillance and intelligence networks.
- A broad range of communications equipment
- Interoperability with both more and less sophisticated forces
- Ocean transit and loiter capabilities
- Capacity to provide limited logistics, humanitarian aid, troop support and refugee succor.
- Credible self-defense systems (possibly with some anti-mine capability).

We believe that an expanded force of four to six ships should be sufficient to meet America's overseas commitments.

As the Coast Guard enters its third century of service, our recommendations will continue to make it responsive to America's needs yet maintain its distinctive character. The US Coast Guard indeed remains a unique national security instrument.

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#### Notes

1. Robert Stephens Staley II, *The Wave of the Future: The United Nations and Naval Peacekeeping* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992).
2. Derek Boothby, "Sailing Under New Colors," *Proceedings*, July 1992, p. 50. Mr. Boothby confirmed his views in an interview on 5 April 1994.
3. See for example, David E. Pitt, "UN Envoys Fear New Cod Wars as Fish Dwindle," *New York Times*, 20 March 1994, p. 6.
4. See "The catch about fish," *The Economist*, 19 March 1994, pp. 13-14.
5. Boothby, *op. cit.* in note 2.
6. "U.N. embargoes," *Washington Times*, 4 April 1994, p. 12.
7. See John Mackinlay and Jarat Chopra, *A Draft Concept of Second Generation Multinational Operations 1993* (Providence: Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, 1993).
8. See John Mackinlay, "Successful Intervention," *Internationale Spectator*, Vol. 47, No. 11, November 1993, p. 662.
9. For examples of the types of craft available, see Captain Gualterio I Del Cruz, Philippine Navy, "Time for a NEW Coast Guard," *Proceedings*, March 1994, pp. 58-61.
10. See Juan Carlos Neves, *United Nations Peace-keeping Operations in the Gulf of Fonseca by Argentine Navy Units* (Newport: Naval War College Strategy and Campaign Department, 12 January 1993).

11. All tables were created with the assistance of CDR Les Sim, RN, Strategic Research Department, Center for Naval Warfare Studies, Naval War College.

12. Mackinlay, *op. cit.* in note 8, p. 662.

13. Indarjit Rikhye, "The United Nations Operations in the Congo: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding," in Donald C.F. Daniel and Bradd C. Hayes (eds.), *Beyond Traditional Peacekeeping* (London: The Macmillan Press, forthcoming).

14. *The U.S. Coast Guard: A Unique National Security Instrument* (Newport: U.S. Naval War College, June 1993), p. 15.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

17. Admiral J. William Kime, "Statement on the Fiscal Year 1995 Budget Before the Subcommittee on Transportation and Related Agencies," 22 March 1994.

18. Colin L. Powell, 28 October 1992, quoted in *The United States Coast Guard: A Distinct Instrument of National Security* (Washington, DC: US Department of Transportation).

19. Kime, *op. cit.* in note 17.

20. Admiral Charles R. Larson, "Statement Before the Senate Armed Services Committee Posture Hearing," 2 March 1994.

21. William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, Act II, Scene 2.